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REIDSVILLE MAN JAILED FOR ROLE IN MURDERS

A 21-year-old Reidsville man, who believed he was aiding Frederick 'Fritz' Klenner in a CIA operation to kill drug dealers -- not three innocent people -- is expected to begin a four-month jail term Monday.

Ian Perkins, choking on tears and hanging his head on the witness stand, pleaded guilty Wednesday to accessory after the fact in the May 18 Old Town murders of Hattie Newsom, her son, Robert Newsom Jr., and his wife, Florence Newsom.

Forsyth County Superior Court Judge Edward Washington sentenced Perkins to four months in jail, fined him \$3,000 and put him on five years probation for driving Klenner from Peaks of Otter, Va., to Old Town and back May 18 and 19. Perkins was a Washington and Lee University student when the murders occurred.

Klenner killed himself and his girlfriend, Susie Newsom Lynch, June 3 when he blew up a van in Greensboro. Lynch's two sons, 9-year-old James and 10-year-old John, were fed cyanide and shot in the head before the blast.

Florence and Robert Newsom were Susie Lynch's parents, and Hattie Newsom her grandmother. Klenner also has been linked to the 1984 slayings of two Kentucky women, Delores Lynch and her daughter, Janie Lynch. Delores Lynch was the mother of Thomas Lynch, Susie Lynch's ex-husband.

Perkins, who dreamed of a career in the foreign service, said he was shocked when he learned from detectives May 30 that he had helped kill a great-grandmother, her son and his wife.

'At that point I realized that something terribly wrong had happened,' Perkins testified, his voice cracking. 'And I wanted to attempt to right that wrong as best I could.'

Perkins agreed to tape conversations with Klenner to help police build a case against Klenner. Two hours after Perkins made a third tape on June 3, authorities closed in on Klenner.

Although Washington said he took into consideration Perkins' good background, he said he had to consider that Perkins condoned the murders. Perkins admitted knowing that Klenner was going to North Carolina to kill three people, but he said he believed Klenner was a government agent killing international criminals.

'I cannot believe the laws of North Carolina or of the United States can be interpreted or construed to allow any individual to participate in a course of action where a person is executed without trial, without the opportunity to defend himself, without examination of that person's guilt or innocence,' Washington said.

During a search of Lynch's Greensboro apartment after the explosion, police found a note written by Klenner, said Forsyth County Sheriff's Sgt. Allen Gentry.

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The note said, "This is to certify that my friend Ian Perkins was involved in no wrongdoings of any kind. He was with me on a camping trip at the Peaks of Otter on the weekend of May 18. To the best of my knowledge, he thought he was training for a career in covert operations in the CIA."

Perkins told Washington he believed that on a government mission, killing drug dealers could be done legally.

"It is an odious thing," Perkins testified. "If by my actions I can prevent even an iota of suffering for those who become hooked on drugs by the situation that Fritz told me about, I believe it is worth the stain upon myself."